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FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Written statement submitted by North-South 21, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[4 March 1997]

1. The fundamental aspect of the Vienna Declaration on human rights adopted by consensus in June 1993 is the rejection of the distinctions made in the past between the various human rights. Certain rights were considered to have priority and binding force, whereas others were held to be mere political declarations of intent without any positive value. The international community has thus solemnly recognized the strict equality and interdependence of all rights and freedoms: individual and collective, political and civil, or economic and social rights.

2. However, the Declaration of Vienna did not receive widespread media coverage. Certain States, which in fact are not favourably disposed to the identical treatment of, for example, the freedom of origin and the right to development or political and social democracy, but which are not politically able to formally oppose this Declaration, are endeavouring to deny it publicity or to find anything positive in it.

3. Certain non-governmental organizations are doing the same. At the closing meeting of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Human Rights in 1996, the Director of the Centre for Human Rights expressed regret that certain States did not accord it any practical importance.

4. It is therefore proposed that the Declaration of Vienna should be systematically distributed by United Nations bodies to the international public, and that the United Nations Commission on Human Rights should call on all States to transform this Declaration into a convention with binding force.

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